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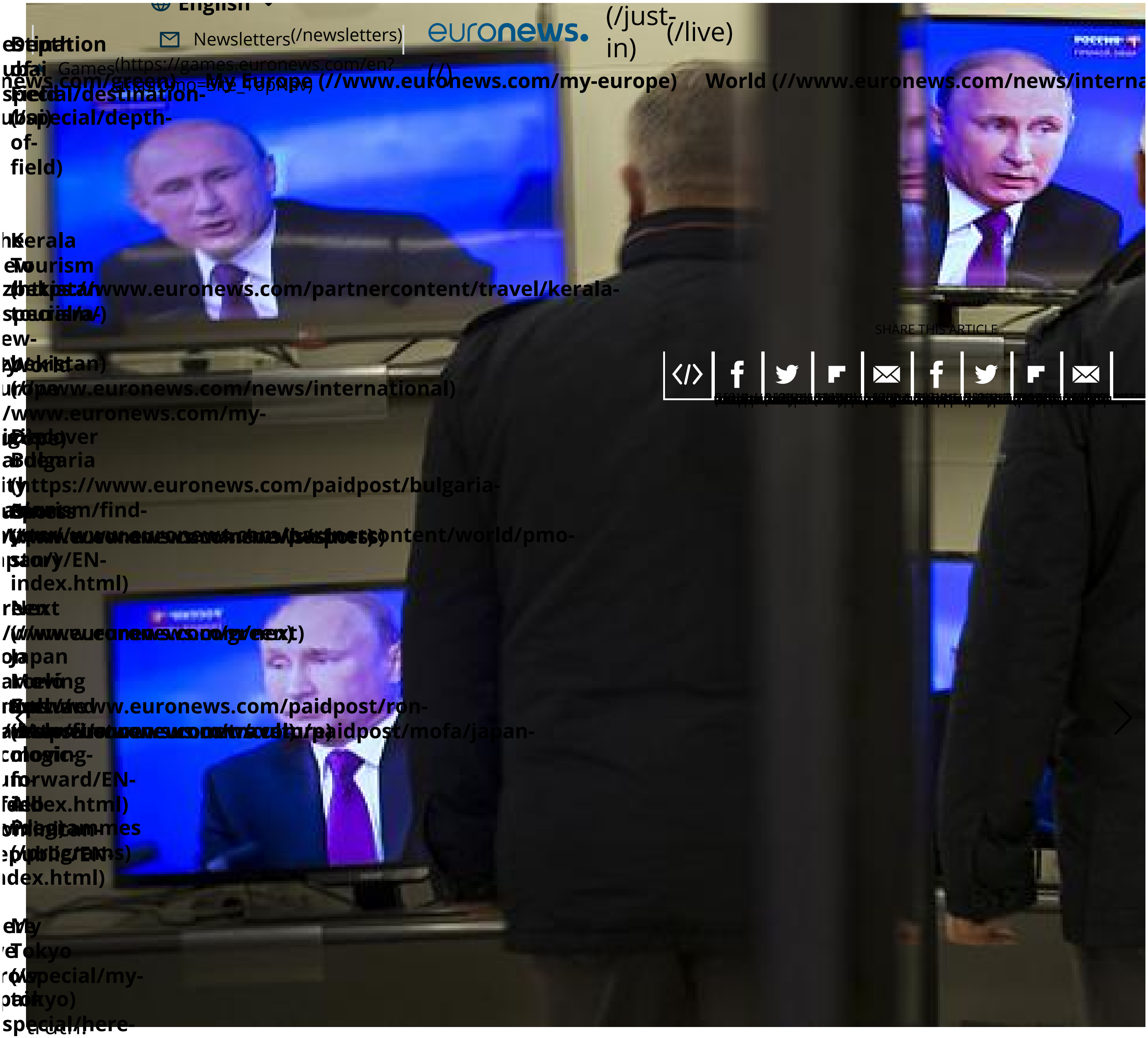
Two independent Russian media outlets forced off air amid Ukra

By **Aleksandar Brezar** (https://twitter.com/brezaleksandar) • Updated: 03/03/2022 - 21:33



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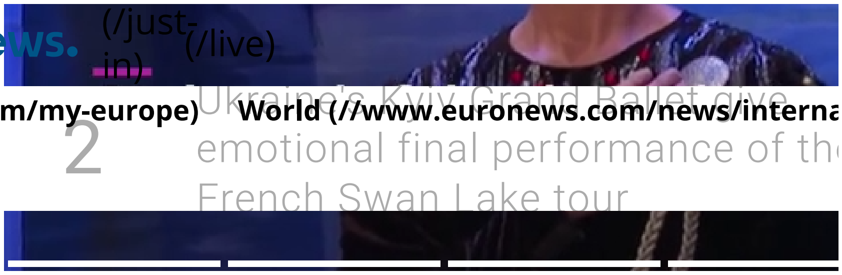
Ekho Moskvy, one of Russia's oldest independent radio stations, was closed permanently, its board of

By the afternoon the same day, **Dozhd** — the country's most popular independent channel — also ann suspension.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"Censorship has been officially introduced in Russia," Meduza, a leading international investigative outl said in an editorial on Wednesday.

"Perhaps in a few days, there will be no functioning independent media in the country."

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Internet glitch as the first sign of censorship

The trouble for independent outlets in Russia started on 26 February – the third day of the invasion – w access to both was restricted.

The two social media platforms would not load properly, making the platforms unusable, and raising co

On the same day, the country's media regulator, Roskomnadzor sent a letter to ten outlets including Ek Gazeta, warning them that access to their content would be "restricted" if they did not remove what it c

The letter also demanded that any content about the war in Ukraine not in line with the country's new r "act of war" were explicitly mentioned as unacceptable by the authorities.

An armed man stands by the remains of a Russian military vehicle in Bucha, close to the

The content deemed problematic also included coverage of domestic protests and interviews and op-e

By Monday, two outlets from the list — US Congress-funded Krym.Realii and Current Time TV, a project blocked.

RFE refused to collaborate and delete the information on the Kremlin's invasion, including reports on R president Jamie Fly said.

"We will not comply," Fly stated on Twitter.

Ekho Moskvy was taken off the airwaves on Tuesday after the State Prosecutor's Office accused it of "ca false information".

The Prosecutor's Office launched the same accusations against Dozhd, Russia's top independent chann Roskomnadzor complied.

Editor-in-chief of Ekho Moskvy Alexei Venediktov rejected the accusations, saying they "are not support offensive to journalists and citizens of Russia."

Dozhd issued a statement rejecting the accusations against the TV channel, saying it "strictly follows Ru

Dozhd's editor-in-chief Tikhon Dzyadko left Russia the next day, amid fears for his safety — a decision s

"After the illegal blockage of Dozhd's site, Dozhd accounts on several social networks, as well as threats the personal safety of some of us is now under threat," Dzyadko explained in a post on Telegram.

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Journalists fear they will fare the worst

Censorship in Russia is prohibited by the constitution. But the legislative acts around it, like the country Roskomnadzor allow the Kremlin to exercise pressure on the entire media scene.

An October 2020 addition to the law forces outlets deemed to fall under the category of "foreign agents to precede all of their content with a statement saying that "this material" was distributed by a foreign r of a foreign agent". The statement is in all-caps has to be featured in every article.

In addition to a number of restrictions, the label also cuts access to advertising revenue from any comp perceived as working for the enemy.

The list includes RFE, Meduza, and Dozhd.

In the meantime, lesser-known, regional outlets have rebelled against the Kremlin's instruction. VK-med its newspapers published in the northern cities of the Sverdlovsk region openly oppose the war.

"This madness must be stopped!", the four outlets stated across their Wednesday front pages.

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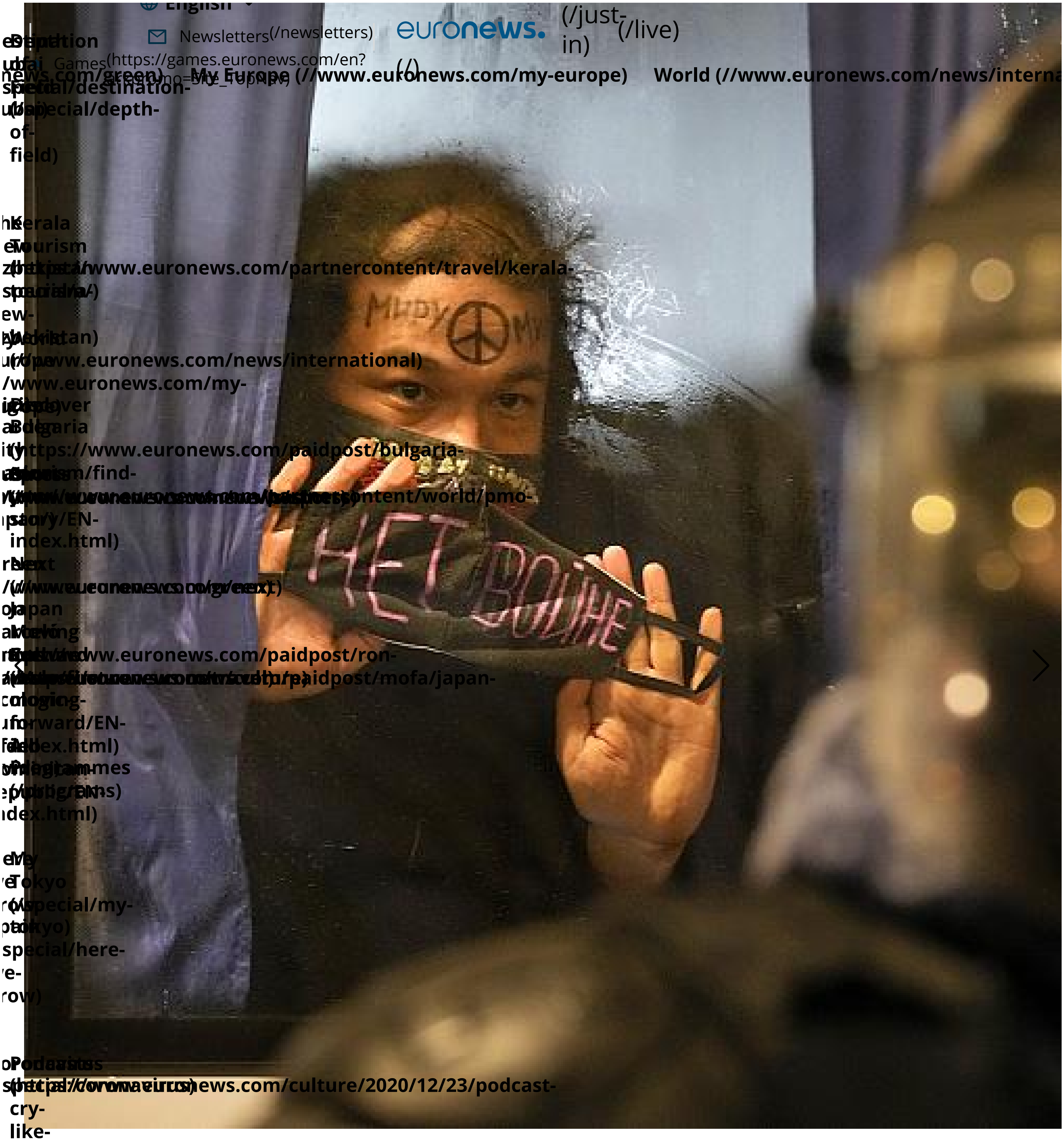

A detained demonstrator shows a sign 'No War!' from a police bus in St. Peters

Adding to the fears are the widespread rumours that Putin is about to announce martial law, which wo country. A decision made on Thursday to forcefully enlist people arrested for protesting the war to go a

"It's just a matter of days now before they finally shut us down and very likely, even worse," an employe Euronews under the condition of anonymity.

When asked if by “worse” they meant arrests and imprisonment, they replied with “Yes”.

“Journalists in Russia right now are at great risk, and the risks range from simply being hunted dow

actual imprisonment under several articles of the law at once,” said Aleksandr Plushev, Russian journali

since 1994.

By removing the few remaining yet authoritative voices from the public sphere, Putin is attempting to c

Kremlin-backed separatist republics of Donetsk and Lugansk in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas

“Russian television, which is watched and trusted by about half the Russian population, reports that thi

operation to denazify Ukraine, whatever that means.”

“People are told that everything spread by the Western press and the Ukrainian side is a fake,” Plushev

in Russia.

“And if he considers any of us an influential media source, he will come after us.”

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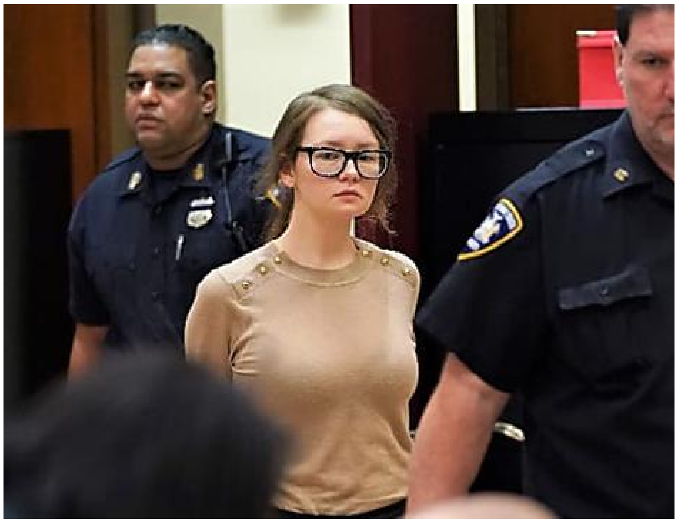

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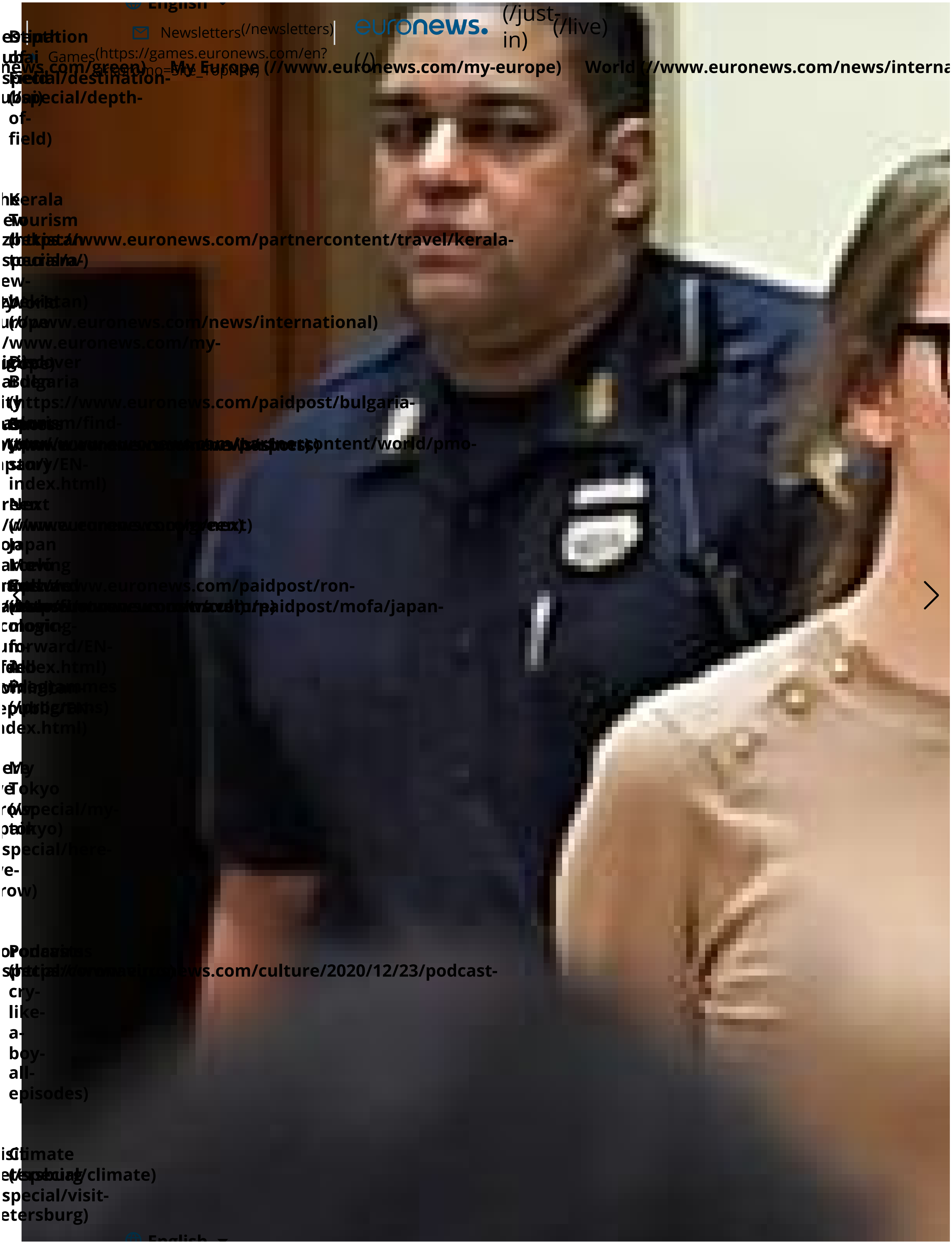

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